

living. The desire of success has been greatly enlarged in the black man's soul. A half-dozen years and that black man has woven himself into the industrial fibre of his locality, has gone where there seemed to be no water and brought forth the sparkling flow to which his people may go and quench their longing thirst. And he has set the standard of man in his community not upon a man's ability to think or work, be that ever so vital, but rather upon the purpose and end of the man's thinking or working.

This is the new Negro man as followed from the cradle through boyhood and college days on to the larger life, where men are known according as they do less theorizing and more actual, practical work; according as they turn their vast learning and wealth into simple, kindly helps to the poor, distressed, and suffering; and in proportion as they make the play and music and revelry of the high head the common enjoyment of all.

The new Negro man is facing a brighter sun than ever his father knew, in spite of the dark prophecies and hopeless pessimism which greet him on every side. The Negro father, on the one hand, irresponsibly hedged in with ignorance too dense to admit of much foresight, sees nothing for the son but a perpetuation of his own social, political, and material advancement to the abnormal state of affairs now existing, but goes more often far contrary to what he really thinks is the best and right in the long run

in the preparation of his son for life's work, in the hope of at least meeting present exigencies.

On the other hand, most of the newspapers and the evil men behind them paint the new Negro out of the pigments of senseless antipathy, call him a brute and, fixing suspicion on him, seek to revert the cast of manhood into cowardly, cringing and wilful serfdom. Here then, is no encouragement. What of the new Negro man's future? The future is the man's, and he is relying on the strong arm of merit which providence has developed so as to cope with all human means and needs.

The new Negro man as represented in the accompanying sketches sees nothing but vital principles to sustain him in his struggle for place and power, and, like Socrates, would prefer the hemlock, or its equivalent, to all the vain pleasures outside of death than give over a single unit of right. He will do this not for his own sake merely, but for the sake of humanity, even the sake of the human who would decry principle to raise temporarily himself. The present fight is a fight for manhood—not man. Man dies. Manhood lives forever.

"I can die!" says that brave young man in Attick's review. "I can die for principle,—die loving and kissing my enemy."

This is the new Negro man's day. Let him be found always studying, thinking, working, for the social hour, when dancing, and merry-making are to enter, has not come. Gird up your loins, young man, and hurry.

## RAY STANNARD BAKER

### An Ostracised Race in Ferment: The Conflict of Negro Parties and Negro Leaders Over Methods of Dealing with Their Own Problem (1908)

One of the things that has interested me most of all in studying Negro communities, especially in the North, has been to find them so torn by cliques and divided by such wide differences of opinion.

No other element of our population presents a similar condition; the Italians, the Jews, the Germans and especially the Chinese and Japanese are held together not only by a different language, but by ingrained and ancient

national habits. They group themselves naturally. But the Negro is an American in language and customs; he knows no other traditions and he has no other conscious history; a large proportion, indeed, possess varying degrees of white American blood (restless blood!) and yet the Negro is not accepted as an American. Instead of losing himself gradually in the dominant race, as the Germans, Irish, and Italians are doing, adding those traits or qualities with which Time fashions and modifies this human mosaic called the American nation, the Negro is set apart as a peculiar people.

With every Negro, then, an essential question is: "How shall I meet this attempt to put me off by myself?"

That question in one form or another—politically, industrially, socially—is being met daily, almost hourly, by every Negro in this country. It colours his very life.

"You don't know, and you can't know," a Negro said to me, "what it is to be a problem, to understand that everyone is watching you and studying you, to have your mind constantly on your own actions. It has made us think and talk about ourselves more than other people do. It has made us self-conscious and sensitive."

It is scarcely surprising, then, that upon such a vital question there should be wide differences of opinion among Negroes. As a matter of fact, there are almost innumerable points of view and suggested modes of conduct, but they all group themselves into two great parties which are growing more distinct in outline and purpose every day. Both parties exist in every part of the country, but it is in the North that the struggle between them is most evident. I have found a sharper feeling and a bitterer discussion of race relationships among the Negroes of the North than among those of the South. If you want to hear the race question discussed with fire and fervour, go to Boston!

For two hundred and fifty years the Negro had no thought, no leadership, no parties; then suddenly he was set free, and became, so far as law could make him, an integral and indistinguishable part of the American people. But it was only in a few places in the North and among comparatively few individuals that he ever

approximately reached the position of a free citizen, that he ever really enjoyed the rights granted to him under the law. In the South he was never free politically, socially, and industrially, in the sense that the white man is free, and is not so to-day.

But in Boston, and in other Northern cities in lesser degree, a group of Negroes reached essentially equal citizenship. A few families trace their lineage back to the very beginnings of civilisation in this country, others were freemen long before the war, a few had Revolutionary War records of which their descendants are intensely and justly proud. Some of the families have far more white blood than black; though the census shows that only about 40 per cent of the Negroes of Boston are mulattoes, the real proportion is undoubtedly very much higher.

In abolition times these Negroes were much regarded. Many of them attained and kept a certain real position among the whites; they were even accorded unusual opportunities and favours. They found such a place as an educated Negro might find to-day (or at least as he found a few years ago) in Germany. In some instances they became wealthy. At a time when the North was passionately concerned in the abolition of slavery the colour of his skin sometimes gave the Negro special advantages, even honours.

For years after the war this condition continued; then a stream of immigration of Southern Negroes began to appear, at first a mere rivulet, but latterly increasing in volume, until to-day all of our Northern cities have swarming coloured colonies. Owing to the increase of the Negro population and for other causes which I have already mentioned, sentiment in the North toward the Negro has been undergoing a swift change.

### How Colour Lines Are Drawn

Now the tragedy of the Negro is the colour of his skin: he is easily recognisable. The human tendency is to class people together by outward appearances. When the line began to be drawn it was drawn not alone against the unworthy

Negro, but against the Negro. It was not so much drawn by the highly intelligent white man as by the white man. And the white man alone has not drawn it, but the Negroes themselves are drawing it—and more and more every day. So we draw the line in this country against the Chinese, the Japanese, and in some measure against the Jews (and they help to draw it). So we speak with disparagement of “dagoes” and “square heads.” Right or wrong, these lines, in our present state of civilisation, are drawn. They are here; they must be noted and dealt with.

What was the result? The Northern Negro who has been enjoying the free life of Boston and Philadelphia has protested passionately against the drawing of a colour line: he wishes to be looked upon, and not at all unnaturally, for he possesses human ambitions and desires, solely for his worth as a man, not as a Negro.

In Philadelphia I heard of the old Philadelphia Negroes, in Indianapolis of the old Indianapolis families, in Boston a sharp distinction was drawn between the “Boston Negroes” and the recent Southern importation. Even in Chicago, where there is nothing old, I found the same spirit.

In short, it is the protest against separation, against being deprived of the advantages and opportunities of a free life. In the South the most intelligent and best educated Negroes are, generally speaking, the leaders of their race, but in Northern cities some of the ablest Negroes will have nothing to do with the masses of their own people or with racial movement; they hold themselves aloof, asserting that there is no colour line, and if there is, there should not be. Their associations and their business are largely with white people and they cling passionately to the fuller life.

“When I am sick,” one of them said to me, “I don’t go to a Negro doctor, but to a doctor. Colour has nothing to do with it.”

In the South the same general setting apart of Negroes as Negroes is going on, of course, on an immeasurably wider scale. By disfranchisement they are being separated politically, the Jim Crow laws set them apart socially and physically, the hostility of white labour in some callings pushes them aside in the industrial activities.

But the South presents no such striking contrasts as the North, because no Southern Negroes were ever really accorded a high degree of citizenship.

## Two Great Negro Parties

Now, the Negroes of the country are meeting the growing discrimination against them in two ways, out of which have grown the two great parties to which I have referred. One party has sprung, naturally, from the thought of the Northern Negro and is a product of the freedom which the Northern Negro has enjoyed; although, of course, it finds many followers in the South.

The other is the natural product of the far different conditions in the South, where the Negro cannot speak his mind, where he has never realised any large degree of free citizenship. Both are led by able men, and both are backed by newspapers and magazines. It has come, indeed, to the point where most Negroes of any intelligence at all have taken their place on one side or the other.

The second-named party, which may best, perhaps, be considered first, is made up of the great mass of the coloured people both South and North; its undisputed leader is Booker T. Washington.

## The Rise of Booker T. Washington

Nothing has been more remarkable in the recent history of the Negro than Washington’s rise to influence as a leader, and the spread of his ideals of education and progress. It is noteworthy that he was born in the South, a slave, that he knew intimately the common struggling life of his people and the attitude of the white race toward them. He worked his way to education in Southern schools and was graduated at Hampton—a story which he tells best himself in his book, “Up From Slavery.” He was and is Southern in feeling and point of view. When he began to think how he could best help his people the same question came to him that comes to every Negro:



"What shall we do about this discrimination and separation?"

And his was the type of character which answered, "Make the best of it; overcome it with self-development."

The very essence of his doctrine is this:

"Get yourself right, and the world will be all right."

His whole work and his life have said to the white man:

"You've set us apart. You don't want us. All right; we'll be apart. We can succeed as Negroes."

It is the doctrine of the opportunist and optimist: peculiarly, indeed, the doctrine of the man of the soil, who has come up fighting, dealing with the world, not as he would like to have it, but as it overtakes him. Many great leaders have been like that: Lincoln was one. They have the simplicity and patience of the soil, and the immense courage and faith. To prevent being crushed by circumstances they develop humour; they laugh off their troubles. Washington has all of these qualities of the common life: he possesses in high degree what some one has called "great commonness." And finally he has a simple faith in humanity, and in the just purposes of the Creator of humanity.

Being a hopeful opportunist Washington takes the Negro as he finds him, often ignorant, weak, timid, surrounded by hostile forces, and tells him to go to work at anything, anywhere, but go to work, learn how to work better, save money, have a better home, raise a better family.

### **What Washington Teaches the Negro**

The central idea of his doctrine, indeed, is work. He teaches that if the Negro wins by real worth a strong economic position in the country, other rights and privileges will come to him naturally. He should get his rights, not by gift of the white man, but by earning them himself.

"I noticed," he says, "when I first went to Tuskegee to start the Tuskegee Normal and Industrial Institute, that some of the white people about there looked rather doubtfully at me. I thought I could get their influence by telling them how much algebra and history and science

and all those things I had in my head, but they treated me about the same as they did before. They didn't seem to care about the algebra, history, and science that were in my head only. Those people never even began to have confidence in me until we commenced to build a large three-story brick building; and then another and another, until now we have eighty-six buildings which have been erected largely by the labour of our students, and to-day we have the respect and confidence of all the white people in that section.

"There is an unmistakable influence that comes over a white man when he sees a black man living in a two-story brick house that has been paid for."

In another place he has given his ideas of what education should be:

"How I wish that, from the most cultured and highly endowed university in the great North to the humblest log cabin schoolhouse in Alabama, we could burn, as it were, into the hearts and heads of all that usefulness, that service to our brother is the supreme end of education."

It is, indeed, to the teaching of service in the highest sense that Washington's life has been devoted. While he urges every Negro to reach as high a place as he can, he believes that the great masses of the Negroes are best fitted to-day for manual labour; his doctrine is that they should be taught to do that labour better: that when the foundations have been laid in sound industry and in business enterprise, the higher callings and honours will come of themselves.

His emphasis is rather upon duties than upon rights. He does not advise the Negro to surrender a single right: on the other hand, he urges his people to use fully every right they have or can get—for example, to vote wherever possible, and vote thoughtfully. But he believes that some of the rights given the Negro have been lost because the Negro had neither the wisdom nor the strength to use them properly.

### **Washington's Influence on His People**

I have not said much thus far in these articles about Booker T. Washington, but as I have been



travelling over this country, South and North, studying Negro communities, I have found the mark of him everywhere in happier human lives. (Wherever I found a prosperous Negro enterprise, a thriving business place, a good home, there I was almost sure to find Booker T. Washington's picture over the fireplace or a little framed motto expressing his gospel of work and service). I have heard bitter things said about Mr. Washington by both coloured people and white. I have waited and investigated many of these stories, and I am telling here what I have seen and known of his influence among thousands of common, struggling human beings. Many highly educated Negroes, especially, in the North, dislike him and oppose him; but he has brought new hope and given new courage to the masses of his race. He has given them a working plan of life. And is there a higher test of usefulness? Measured by any standard, white or black, Washington must be regarded to-day as one of the great men of this country: and in the future he will be so honoured.

### **Dr. Du Bois and the Negro**

The party led by Washington is made up of the masses of the common people; the radical party, on the other hand, represents what may be called the intellectuals. The leading exponent of its point of view is unquestionably Professor W. E. B. Du Bois of Atlanta University—though, like all minority parties, it is torn with dissension and discontent. Dr. Du Bois was born in Massachusetts of a family that had no history of Southern slavery. He has a large intermixture of white blood. Broadly educated at Harvard and in the universities of Germany, he is to-day one of the able sociologists of this country. His economic studies of the Negro made for the United States Government and for the Atlanta University conference (which he organised) are works of sound scholarship and furnish the student with the best single source of accurate information regarding the Negro at present obtainable in this country. And no book gives a deeper insight into the inner life of

the Negro, his struggles and his aspirations, than "The Souls of Black Folk."

Dr. Du Bois has the temperament of the scholar and idealist—critical, sensitive, unhumorous, impatient, often covering its deep feeling with sarcasm and cynicism. When the question came to him:

"What shall the Negro do about discrimination?" his answer was the exact reverse of Washington's: it was the voice of Massachusetts:

"Do not submit! agitate, object, fight."

Where Washington reaches the hearts of his people, Du Bois appeals to their heads. Du Bois is not a leader of men, as Washington is: he is rather a promulgator of ideas. While Washington is building a great educational institution and organising the practical activities of the race, Du Bois is the lonely critic holding up distant ideals. Where Washington cultivates friendly human relationships with the white people among whom the lot of the Negro is cast; Du Bois, sensitive to rebuffs, draws more and more away from white people.

### **A Negro Declaration of Independence**

Several years ago Du Bois organised the Niagara movement for the purpose of protesting against the drawing of the colour line. It is important, not so much for the extent of its membership, which is small, but because it represents, genuinely, a more or less prevalent point of view among many coloured people.

Its declaration of principles says:

We refuse to allow the impression to remain that the Negro-American assents to inferiority, is submissive under oppression and apologetic before insults. Through helplessness we may submit, but the voice of protest of ten million Americans must never cease to assail the ears of their fellows, so long as America is unjust.

Any discrimination based simply on race or colour is barbarous, we care not how hallowed it be by custom, expediency, or prejudice. Differences made on account of ignorance, immorality, or disease are legitimate methods of fighting evil, and against

them we have no word of protest, but discriminations based simply and solely on physical peculiarities, place of birth, colour of skin, are relics of that unreasoning human savagery of which the world is, and ought to be, thoroughly ashamed.

The object of the movement is to protest against disfranchisement and Jim Crow laws and to demand equal rights of education, equal civil rights, equal economic opportunities, and justice in the courts. Taking the ballot from the Negro they declare to be only a step to economic slavery; that it leaves the Negro defenseless before his competitor—that the disfranchisement laws in the South are being followed by all manner of other discriminations which interfere with the progress of the Negro.

"Persistent manly agitation is the way to liberty," says the declaration, "and toward this goal the Niagara movement has started."

The annual meeting of the movement was held last August in Boston, the chief gathering being in Faneuil Hall. Every reference in the speeches to Garrison, Phillips, and Sumner was cheered to the echo. "It seemed," said one newspaper report, "like a revival of the old spirit of abolitionism—with the white man left out."

Several organisations in the country, like the New England Suffrage League, the Equal Rights League of Georgia, and others, take much the same position as the Niagara movement.

The party led by Dr. Du Bois is, in short, a party of protest which endeavours to prevent Negro separation and discrimination against Negroes by agitation and political influence.

## Two Negro Parties Compared

These two points of view, of course, are not peculiar to Negroes; they divide all human thought. The opportunist and optimist, on the one hand, does his great work with the world as he finds it: he is resourceful, constructive, familiar. On the other hand, the idealist, the agitator, who is also a pessimist, performs the function of the critic; he sees the world as it should be and cries out to have it instantly changed.

Thus with these two great Negro parties. Each is working for essentially the same end—better conditions of life for the Negro—each contains brave and honest men, and each is sure, humanly enough, that the other side is not only wrong, but venally wrong, whereas both parties are needed and both perform a useful function.

The chief, and at present almost the only, newspaper exponent of the radical Negro point of view is *The Boston Guardian* published by William Monroe Trotter. Mr. Trotter is a mulatto who was graduated a few years ago with high honours from Harvard. His wife, who is active with him in his work, has so little Negro blood that she would ordinarily pass for white. Mr. Trotter's father fought in the Civil War and rose to be a lieutenant in Colonel Hallowell's Massachusetts regiment. He was one of the leaders of the Negro soldiers who refused to accept \$8 a month as servants when white soldiers received \$13. He argued that if a Negro soldier stood up and stopped a bullet, he was as valuable to the country as the white soldier. Though his family suffered, he served without pay rather than accept the money. It was the uncompromising spirit of Garrison and Phillips.

## A Negro Newspaper of Agitation

*The Guardian* is as violent and bitter in some of its denunciation as the most reactionary white paper in the South. It would have the North take up arms again and punish the South for its position on the Negro question! It breathes the spirit of prejudice. Reading it sometimes, I am reminded of Senator Tillman's speeches. It answers the white publicity given in the South to black crime against white women by long accounts of similar crimes of white men. One of its chief points of conflict is the position of President Roosevelt regarding the Brownsville riot and the discharge of Negro soldiers; the attack on Roosevelt is unceasing, and in this viewpoint, at least, it is supported undoubtedly by no small proportion of the Negroes of the country. Another leading activity is its fight

on Booker T. Washington and his work. Denouncing Washington as a "notorious and incorrigible Jim Crowist," it says that he "dares to assert that the best way to get rights is not to oppose their being taken away, but to get money." Two or three years ago, when Mr. Washington went to Boston to address a coloured audience in Zion Church, Mr. Trotter and his friends scattered cayenne pepper on the rostrum and created a disturbance which broke up the meeting. Mr. Trotter went to jail for the offense. From the *Guardian* of September 2 I cut part of the leading editorial which will show its attitude:

#### PROPHET OF SLAVERY AND TRAITOR RACE

As another mark of the treacherous character of Booker Washington in matters concerning the race, come his discordant notes in support of Secretary Taft for President of the United States in spite of the fact that every Negro organisation of any note devoted to the cause of equal rights and justice have condemned President Roosevelt for his unpardonable treatment of the soldiers of the 25th Infantry, U.S.A., and Secretary Taft for his duplicity, and declared their determination to seek the defeat of either if nominated for the office of President of the United States, or anyone named by them for said office. Booker Washington, ever concerned for his own selfish ambitions, indifferent to the cries of the race so long as he wins the approval of white men who do not believe in the Negro, defies the absolutely unanimous call of all factions of the race for Foraker. Leader of the self-seekers, he has persistently, but thank heaven unsuccessfully, sought to entangle the whole race in the meshes of subordination. Knowing the race could only be saved by fighting cowardice, we have just as persistently resisted every attempt he has made to plant his white flag on the domains of equal manhood rights and our efforts have been rewarded by the universal denunciation of his doctrines of submission and his utter elimination as a possible leader of his race.

Generally speaking, the radical party has fought every movement of any sort that tends to draw a colour line.

#### Boston Hotel for Coloured People

One of the enterprises of Boston which interested me deeply was a Negro hotel, the Astor House, which is operated by Negroes for Negro guests. It has 200 rooms, with a telephone in each room, a restaurant, and other accommodations. It struck me that it was a good example of Negro self-help that Negroes should be proud of. But upon mentioning it to a coloured man I met I found that he was violently opposed to it.

"Why hotels for coloured men?" he asked. "I believe in hotels for men. The coloured man must not draw the line himself if he doesn't want the white man to do it. He must demand and insist constantly upon his rights as an American citizen."

I found in Boston and in other Northern cities many Negroes who took this position. A white woman, who sought to establish a help and rescue mission for coloured girls similar to those conducted for the Jews, Italians, and other nationalities in other cities, was violently opposed, on the ground that it set up a precedent for discrimination. In the same way separate settlement work (though there is a separate settlement for Jews in Boston) and the proposed separate Y.M.C.A. have met with strong protests. Everything that tends to set the Negro off as a Negro, whether the white man does it or the Negro does it, is bitterly opposed by this party of coloured people.

They fought the Jamestown Exposition because it had a Negro Building, which they called the "Jim Crow Annex," and they fought the National Christian Endeavour Convention because the leaders could not assure Negro delegates exactly equal facilities in the hotels and restaurants. Of course the denunciation of the white South is continuous and bitter. It is noteworthy, however, that even the leaders of the movement not only recognise and conduct separate newspapers and ask Negroes to support them, but that they urge Negroes to stand together politically.



## Boston Negroes Seen by a New York Negro Newspaper

But the large proportion of coloured newspapers in the country, the strongest and ablest of which is perhaps *Age*, are supporters of Washington and his ideals. The Boston correspondent of the *Age* said recently:

It is unfortunate in Boston that we have a hall which we can get free of charge: we refer to Faneuil Hall. They work Faneuil Hall for all it is worth. Scarcely a month ever passes by that does not see a crowd of Afro-Americans in Faneuil Hall throwing up their hats, yelling and going into hysterics over some subject usually relating to somebody a thousand miles away, never in relation to conditions right at home. The better element of Negroes and the majority of our white friends in this city have become disgusted over the policy that is being pursued and has been pursued for several months in Boston. Your correspondent can give you no better evidence of the disgust than to state that a few days ago there was one of these hysterical meetings held in Faneuil Hall and our people yelled and cried and agitated for two hours and more. The next day not one of the leading papers, such as the *Herald* and the *Transcript*, had a single line concerning this meeting. A few years ago had a meeting been held in Faneuil Hall under the leadership of safe and conservative Afro-Americans, both of these newspapers and papers of similar character would have devoted from two to three columns to a discussion of it. Now, in Boston, they let such meetings completely alone.

If there ever was a place where the Negro seems to have more freedom than he seems to know what to do with, it is in this city.

In spite of the agitation against drawing the colour line by the radical party, however, the separation is still going on. And it is not merely the demand of the white man that the Negro step

aside by himself, for the Negro himself is drawing the colour line, and drawing it with as much enthusiasm as the white man. A genuine race-spirit or race-consciousness is developing. Negroes are meeting prejudice with self-development.

It is a significant thing to find that many Negroes who a few years ago called themselves "Afro-Americans," or "Coloured Americans," and who winced at the name Negro, now use Negro as the race name with pride. While in Indianapolis I went to a Negro church to hear a speech by W. T. Vernon, one of the leading coloured men of the country, who was appointed Register of the United States Treasury by President Roosevelt. On the walls of the church hung the pictures of coloured men who had accomplished something for their race, and the essence of the speaker's address was an appeal to racial pride and the demand that the race stand up for itself, encourage Negro business and patronise Negro industry. All of which, surely, is significant.

## How Negroes Themselves Draw the Colour Line

The pressure for separation among the Negroes themselves is growing rapidly stronger. Where there are mixed schools in the North there is often pressure by Negroes for separate schools. The *Philadelphia Courier*, a Negro newspaper, in objecting to this new feeling, says:

Public sentiment, so far as the white people are concerned, does not object to the mixed school system in vogue in our city half as much as the Afro-American people seem to be doing themselves. We find them the chief objectors.

One reason why the South to-day has a better development of Negro enterprise, one reason why Booker T. Washington believes that the South is a better place for the Negro than the North, and advises him to remain there, is this more advanced racial spirit. Prejudice there, being sharper, has forced the Negro back upon his own resources.

Dr. Frissell of Hampton is always talking to his students of the "advantages of disadvantages."

I was much struck with the remark of a Negro business man I met in Indianapolis: "The trouble here is," he said, "that there is not enough prejudice against us."

"How is that?" I inquired.

"Well, you see we are still clinging too much to the skirts of the white man. When you hate us more it will drive us together and make us support coloured enterprises."

When in Chicago I heard of an interesting illustration of this idea. With the increasing number of Negro students prejudice has increased in the Chicago medical schools, until recently some of them have, by agreement, been closed to coloured graduate students. Concerning this condition, the *Chicago Conservator*, a Negro newspaper, says: "The cause of this extraordinary announcement is that the Southern students object to the presence of Negroes in the classes. Now it is up to the Negro doctors of the country to meet this insult by establishing a post-graduate school of their own. They can do it if they have the manhood, self-respect, and push. Let Doctors Hall, Williams, Boyd and others get busy."

To this the *New York Age* adds:

"Yes; let us have a school of that sort of our own."

And this is no idle suggestion. Few people have any conception of the growing progress of Negroes in the medical profession. In August 1907, the Coloured National Medical Association held its ninth annual session at Baltimore. Over three hundred delegates and members were in attendance from thirty different states. Graduates were there not only from Harvard, Yale, and other white colleges, but from coloured medical schools like Meharry and Howard University. Negro hospitals have been opened and are well supported in several cities.

### National Negro Business League

All over the country the Negro is organised in business leagues and these leagues have formed

a National Business League which met last August in Topeka, Kansas. I can do no better in interpreting the spirit of this work, which is indeed the practical spirit of the Southern party, than in quoting briefly from the address of Booker T. Washington, who is the president of the league:

Despite much talk, the Negro is not discouraged, but is going forward. The race owns to-day an acreage equal to the combined acreage of Holland and Belgium. The Negro owns more land, more houses, more stores, more banks, than has ever been true in his history. We are learning that no race can occupy a soil unless it gets as much out of it as any other race gets out of it. Soil, sunshine, rain, and the laws of trade have no regard for race or colour. We are learning that we must be builders if we would succeed. As we learn this lesson we shall find help at the South and at the North. We must not be content to be tolerated in communities, we must make ourselves needed. The law that governs the universe knows no race or colour. The force of nature will respond as readily to the hand of the Chinaman, the Italian, or the Negro as to any other race. Man may discriminate, but nature and the laws that control the affairs of men will not and cannot. Nature does not hide her wealth from a black hand.

All along the line one finds this spirit of hopeful progress. A vivid picture of conditions, showing frankly both the weakness and strength of the Negro, is given by a coloured correspondent of the *Indianapolis Freeman*. He begins by telling of the organisation at Carbondale, Ill., of a joint stock company composed of thirty-nine coloured men to operate a dry goods store. The correspondent writes:

The question is, "Will the coloured people support this enterprise with their patronage?" It is a general cry all over the country that coloured people pass by the doors of our merchants and trade with any other



concerns—Jews, Dagoes, Polacks, and what not. This is a very unfortunate fact which stands before us as a living shame. The very people who preach “race union, race support, race enterprise,” are often the first to pass our own mercantile establishments by. The only places where coloured men can prosper in business are where our people are driven out of other people’s places of business and actually forced to patronise our own. A certain cigar manufacturer in St. Louis, a first-class business man, putting out the very best classes of cigars, said, a few days ago, that some of the hardest work he ever did was to get a few of our own dealers to handle his goods. If but one-third of the stores and stands that sell cigars and tobacco in St. Louis alone would buy their goods of him he could in a few more years employ one or two dozen more men and women in his factory. A dry goods company in the same city is suffering from the same trouble. Our people will condescend to look in, but more often their purchases are made at a neighbouring Jew store. There are also in that neighbourhood several first-class, up-to-date, clean and tasty-looking coloured restaurants: but twice as many Negroes take their meals at the cheap-John, filthy, fourth-class chop counters run by other people near by. But, after all, my people are doing better in these matters than they did some time past. It was a most pleasant surprise to learn, the other day, that the coloured undertakers in St. Louis do every dollar’s worth of business for our people in that line. This information was given by a reliable white undertaker and substantiated by the coloured undertakers. The white man was asked what he thought of it. He said he thought it was a remarkable illustration of the loyalty of the Negro to his own people and that they should be commended for it. And then there are two sides to every question. It is too often true that our people run their business on a low order—noisy, uncleanly, questionable, dive-like concerns—therefore do not deserve the patronage of decent people. Too many of

our men do not know anything about business. They don’t believe in investing their money in advertising their business in good first-class periodicals. We must not expect everybody to know where we are or what we have to sell unless we advertise. Many of our nickels would find their way to the cash drawer of a coloured man if we just knew where to find the store, restaurant, or hotel.

### Remarkable Development of Negroes

It is not short of astonishing, indeed, to discover how far the Negro has been able to develop in the forty-odd years since slavery a distinct race spirit and position. It is pretty well known that he has been going into business, that he is acquiring much land, that he has many professional men, that he worships in his own churches and has many schools which he conducts—but in other lines of activity he is also getting a foothold. Just as an illustration: I was surprised at finding so many Negro theatres in the country—theatres not only owned or operated by Negroes, but presenting plays written and acted by Negroes. I saw a fine new Negro theatre in New Orleans; I visited a smaller coloured theatre in Jackson, Miss., and in Chicago the Pekin Theatre is an enterprise wholly conducted by Negroes. Williams and Walker, Negro comedians, have long amused large audiences, both white and coloured. Their latest production, “Bandanna Land,” written and produced wholly by Negroes, is not only funny, but clean.

Many other illustrations could be given to show how the Negro is developing in one way or another—but especially along racial lines. The extensive organisation of Negro lodges of Elks and Masons and other secret orders, many of them with clubhouses, might be mentioned. Attention might be called to the almost innumerable insurance societies and companies maintained by Negroes, the largest of which, the True Reformers, of Richmond, has over 50,000 members, and to the growth of Negro newspapers and magazines (there are now over



two hundred in the country), but enough has been said, perhaps, to make the point that there has been a real development of a Negro spirit and self-consciousness. Of course these signal successes loom large among the ten million of the country and yet they show the possibilities: there is this hopeful side of Negro conditions in this country as well as the dark and evil aspects of which we hear all too much.

Out of this ferment of racial self-consciousness and readjustment has grown, as I have shown, the two great Negro parties. Between them and within them lie the destinies of the race in this country, and to no small extent

also the destiny of the dominant white race. It is, therefore, of the highest importance for white men to understand the real tendencies of thought and organisation among these ten million Americans. For here is vigour and ability, and whatever may be the white man's attitude toward the Negro, the contempt of mere ignorance of what the Negro is doing is not only short-sighted but positively foolish. Only by a complete understanding can the white man who has assumed the entire responsibility of government in this country meet the crises, like that of the Atlanta riot, which are constantly arising between the races.

WILLIAM PICKENS

The New Negro (1916)

*Use*

*What I aspired to be,  
And was not, comforts me:  
A brute I might have been, but would not  
sink i' the scale.*

—From Browning's "Rabbi Ben Ezra"

The "new Negro" is not really new: he is the same Negro under new conditions and subjected to new demands. Those who regret the passing of the "old Negro" and picture the "new" as something very different, must remember that there is no sharp line of demarcation between the old and the new in any growing organism like a germ, a plant, or a race. The present generation of Negroes have received their chief heritage from the former and, in that, they are neither better nor worse, higher nor lower than the previous generation. But the present Negro is differently circumstanced and must be measured by different standards. He has not less fidelity to duty than had the old Negro: the present Negro soldier is just as true to his uniform, his flag, and his country as was the old Negro slave to his master's family. He is not more indolent: certainly the present Negro does a great deal more of voluntary work than did the

Negro slave. He is not as much more criminal than the old Negro as his criminal *record* would seem to indicate: the present Negro gets into jail for offenses and charges for which the slave received thirty-nine *unrecorded* lashes. Besides, a repressive attitude toward a man in freedom subjects him to worse temptations than a bond-slave is subjected to. Furthermore and quite as important as anything else, there has been some change of attitude in the white people among whom the Negro lives: there is less acquaintanceship,—less sympathy and toleration than formerly.

The average white man of the present generation who sees the Negro daily, perhaps knows less of the Negro than did the similarly situated white man of any previous generation since the black race came to America. This lack of knowledge has a fearful influence on the judgment: it is both history and psychology that where knowledge is wanting, imagination steps in. What naive explanations men once gave of natural phenomena, what odd shapes they ascribed to the earth, and what erroneous proportions and fanciful relations they imagined among the heavenly bodies. The most serious handicap to the creation of a wholesome public